



For Immediate Release
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OFF-ROAD VEHICLE TRAILS IN STATE FORESTS TO OPEN ON MAY 1

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will be opening designated trails for off-road vehicle (ORV) use in Beartown State Forest (Monterey), October Mountain State Forest (Lee), Pittsfield State Forest (Pittsfield), Tolland State Forest (East Otis), F. Gilbert Hills State Forest (Foxboro) and Georgetown-Rowley State Forest (Georgetown) on May 1, 2006. ORV trails suited for motorcycles in Freetown-Fall River State Forest (Assonet) are expected to open on May 8. All other state forests, parks and reservations are closed to ORVs at all times. Inclement weather may delay trails openings, so please call ahead to confirm. For more information, visit <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/forparks.htm>. For ORV registration information, please visit <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dle/elereg.htm>.

DCR asks that riders help promote safe ORV use and protect the environment by following these simple guidelines:

- Respect private property and closed areas
- Ride only on trails that are designated for motorized ORV use
- Keep to the right side of the trail and go slow around blind corners and through intersections
- When passing or approaching other trail users, reduce speed, yield right-of-way and do not pass until it can be accomplished with complete safety
- To prevent habitat and trail damage, stay within the trail corridor and use bridges to cross streams and wet areas
- Try to avoid muddy trails, as they are easily damaged.

All persons operating an ORV must also wear an approved helmet. Under no circumstances may a person under the age of 12 operate an ORV on state lands. A person aged 12 or 13 may operate an ORV if directly supervised by a person over 18 years of age.

DCR is currently in the process of setting standards for any future ORV trail development. To assist the agency in that effort, DCR has assembled a working group composed of trails users, scientists, land management organizations and other stakeholders to review and refine ORV use criteria. Recently, DCR held public meetings across the state to introduce the ORV use criteria and listen to public comments, and the public comment period has been extended to May 1, 2006. Written comments can be sent to ORV.Feedback@state.ma.us. The ORV use criteria can be viewed at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/orvworkgroup.htm>.

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